

REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD

Members of the community may present their views on issues of public concern which relate to the operation of Alexandria City Public Schools, either by submitting written or electronic comments to members of the School Board, or by addressing the Board during the time periods designated for public comments at School Board meetings or during public hearings. These opportunities for community input do not require Board Members or the Division Superintendent to discuss or respond to the speaker's views nor act on a request or proposal.

I. Procedures for Written or Electronic Communications to the School Board

The Alexandria City School Board welcomes communications from the community regarding matters of general importance to the operation of the school division. Written comments may be presented to the Board at any time by mailing or delivering thirteen copies of such material to:

Clerk of the Board
Alexandria City School Board
1340 Braddock Place
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

or to:

boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us.

Electronic communications may also be addressed to the entire Board at board@acps.k12.va.us, or to individual School Board Members at their email addresses listed on the School Board website at www.acps.k12.va.us/board.

II. Procedures for Addressing the Alexandria City School Board during Public Comment Time or Public Hearings

The purpose of School Board meetings is to allow the School Board to conduct public business in an orderly and constructive manner. With the exception of certain public hearings, the School Board is not required to provide public comment time, but does so in order to receive the viewpoints of the community on general issues of public concern related to the operation of the school division. The following rules are intended to minimize or avoid disruption, confine speakers to topics related to the operation of the school division, and to balance the School Board's informational needs with limited time and available resources.

A. Advance Request Procedure

Members of the public who wish to address the Alexandria City School Board should notify the Clerk of the Board in writing or by electronic communications (703-619-8316 or boardclerk@acps.k12.va.us) prior to the meeting date to be placed on the list of speakers during the “Communications and Addresses to the Board” agenda item. Only individuals who have signed up will be permitted to speak, unless otherwise requested by the Chair.

Speakers addressing the Board in person may sign up to speak until the start of the meeting. Speakers addressing the Board remotely via video conference must sign up by 12:00 pm on the day before the meeting.

All speakers must provide the Clerk with their name, email address, home address and phone number in order to permit the Clerk to contact them if necessary. Speakers must also identify the issue of public concern about which they will be speaking.

Anyone who wishes to provide documentary support for the comments they intend to present at the School Board meeting should provide thirteen copies of such documents to the Clerk of the Board.

B. Number and Order of Speakers

Speakers are placed on a list in the order in which they notify the Clerk or at the discretion of the Chair. Students are generally placed at the beginning of the queue. If the number of speakers is too large to be reasonably accommodated, the Chair may ask speakers to voluntarily combine their comments or submit them in writing to the School Board. Speakers are limited to one presentation per meeting.

The total time for public comments and public hearings and the time per speaker are determined by the Chair, and may be adjusted depending on how many individuals have signed up to speak at a particular meeting. While the School Board will do its best to accommodate all speakers who sign up, there is no guarantee that all such individuals will be able to speak at any given meeting.

C. Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

All individuals may speak on agenda items or non-agenda subjects which relate to the operation of the school division. Comments during public hearings shall be confined to the subject of the hearing.

D. Addressing the Alexandria City School Board

Recognition by the Chair is granted to one speaker at a time.

Speakers addressing the Board in person stand at a centrally located microphone and lectern and precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking. Speakers addressing the Board remotely via video conference use the “hand raise” function and wait to be recognized by the Chair. Once recognized, speakers will precede their remarks with their name and the topic on which they will be speaking.

Comments are addressed to the entire School Board and not to individual Board Members, the Superintendent, or other members of the audience. Since cumulative comments tend to prevent other topics from being heard in a timely manner, speakers are encouraged to limit their comments when indicating support or opposition for a previously stated position. The Chair may conclude comments from any speaker if the Chair determines the comments are cumulative or are concerning inappropriate topics.

Speakers shall be extended the courtesy of the School Board and, in turn, speakers shall respect the privilege extended by the School Board by using commonly accepted rules of courtesy, respect, decorum, dignity, and good taste. The use of obscenity, vulgarity, or patently offensive language shall be ruled out of order, as will words or statements which, from their usual construction and common acceptance, incite violence or breach of the peace.

School Board Members listen to public comment and public hearing presentations, but do not comment, deliberate or take action on them. Speakers may follow-up with individual Board Members on the topic of their comments at a later date.

E. Time Limitations

Speakers are typically allocated three minutes each to deliver their remarks. However, in all instances, the allocation of time for speakers is at the Chair’s discretion. The Chair, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Board, shall monitor and enforce the time limitation and in doing so may cut off speakers who have not concluded their remarks in a timely manner. A speaker who does not need the full time allotted may not yield unused time to another speaker.

All persons who have signed up to speak with the Clerk of the School Board prior to the start of the meeting are permitted to speak during the School Board meeting in the regular period designated for Communications and Addresses to the Board, subject to the limitations in Part B of this regulation.

F. Inappropriate Topics

Public comment time and public hearings are intended to allow the community to address the School Board regarding topics or subjects which relate to the operation of the school division and are of public concern to the school community. Therefore, during the period reserved for public participation at meetings, the

School Board does not allow public comments or complaints regarding individual students, student disciplinary matters that are the subject of due process proceedings, matters involving pending employee grievance proceedings or administrative hearings, or matters involving pending litigation.

- Established: September 24, 2009
- Revised: December 4, 2014
- Revised: April 6, 2017
- Revised: March 22, 2018
- Revised: May 9, 2019
- Revised: October 21, 2021

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-253.13:7.
 2016 Op. Va. Att’y Gen. 15-020.
Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. District, 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).
Leventhal v. Vista Unified School District, 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).
Bach v. School Board of the City of Virginia Beach, 139 F. Supp. 2d. 738, 743 (E.D. Va. 2001).

Cross Refs.:	BDDE	Rules of Order
	BDDH	Public Participation at School Board Meetings
	KL	Public Complaints